

## Mark Thiel

---

**From:** Sally Zogry <director@downtownlawrence.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 25, 2018 4:57 PM  
**To:** Mark Thiel  
**Cc:** Tom Markus  
**Subject:** DLI response to Tour of Lawrence permit appeal  
**Attachments:** DLI Response to Tour of Lawrence Appeal.docx; DLI Position Statement on Tour of Lawrence Return 2018.docx

Hello Mark –

Attached please find our statement regarding the Tour of Lawrence committee's appeal to the denial of their event permit. I would appreciate you including this along with our initial statement, also attached, in the information related to the memo for the June 5 City Commission agenda. If you have any questions or need further information from me please let me know.

Thank you –  
Sally

Sally Zogry, Executive Director  
Downtown Lawrence, Inc.  
833-1/2 Massachusetts, Ste A  
Lawrence, KS 66044  
785-842-3883

[www.downtownlawrence.com](http://www.downtownlawrence.com)

Follow us on Facebook! [www.facebook.com/DowntownLawrence](https://www.facebook.com/DowntownLawrence)

Or Twitter @downtwnlawrence

Or Instagram downtownlawrenceks

Downtown Lawrence ... The Heart of the City



May 25, 2018

City of Lawrence Public Works Dept.  
c/o Mark Thiel  
City Hall  
6 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Lawrence, KS 66044

RE: Response to Tour of Lawrence Committee Appeal of Permit Denial for Downtown Criterium on July 1, 2018

Dear Mark,

On behalf of the Downtown Lawrence, Inc. Board of Directors we are providing this response to the Tour of Lawrence committee's appeal of the denial of their street event permit for the Downtown Criterium Bicycle Race on Sunday, July 1, 2018. We have already submitted a position statement related to the event when the permit application was being reviewed, and include it with this letter. Our two meetings with the race director and requests for compromises from the race committee have not resulted in a sustainable event plan and race route. Since the race committee has appealed the denial of their event permit we would like for City staff and the City Commission to consider our previously submitted position statement in addition to several other factors.

In our position statement of May 10, 2018 we requested that the race committee consider four compromises intended to minimize the physical and temporal footprint of the event. Our purpose in making this request was to facilitate an event plan that would allow the cyclists to enjoy a downtown focused race, popular among riders in past years, and also allow downtown businesses to operate for the majority of a weekend day. The compromises are these:

- An alternate course that does not involve a multi-block closure of Mass. Street – possibly stretching into the neighborhoods both east and west of downtown and allowing several major cross streets to remain open.
- An earlier start and finish time, as well as a condensed race schedule, which would allow for a shorter street closure period on Mass. Street as well as side streets.
- A course that does not cut off access to key events (such as church services), parking garages, large surface lots, and would allow at least some alleyways to remain open.
- A liaison from the race committee to answer questions and educate downtown business owners as to the race details and schedule, closure times, and share the plan to allow business owners, employees and customers who need to gain access to blocks affected by the closure.

To date we have received no response from the race director or committee on any of these items. While the race director expressed a willingness and desire to find a way to work together to make the event a success for all involved when we met, we have not had any further communication from her. This lack of response does not engender confidence that the race organizers are committed to working toward an amenable solution with our organization and our membership.

The event as outlined in the permit application features a race route that closes portions of all three major north-south streets (Mass., Vermont, New Hampshire) as well as four east-west streets (7<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>) for the majority of an entire weekend business day. The closure of 7<sup>th</sup> Street between Vermont and New Hampshire has a major impact on The Eldridge Hotel, which is currently undergoing a major renovation project. The main entrance to the hotel is presently on 7<sup>th</sup> Street, as the Mass. Street entrance is closed. Valet parking for hotel guests is also located on 7<sup>th</sup>



Street. Sunday mornings/early afternoons are a busy time for hotel check outs and coordinating guest departures and navigating vehicle returns around gaps between individual race events is terrifically challenging, as well as inconvenient, for hotel guests and staff.

Lack of access for Eldridge guests and staff compounds the access issues for members of the Velocity Church, which meets on Sunday mornings at the Lawrence Arts Center. The race director did say that they would plan to station course marshals near the 9<sup>th</sup> and New Hampshire garage and the Arts Center, both of which will be closed off to traffic, to help direct church members in and out of the area. While we recognize that this is an attempt to accommodate vehicular and pedestrian traffic, we have had issues in prior years with course marshals/volunteers who were not properly trained and tried to restrict access to streets on the course to local business staff trying to navigate the street closures and get to work. Closing off access to alleys and surface lots on New Hampshire and Vermont as well as the 9<sup>th</sup> and New Hampshire garage not only affects church members and potential customers from accessing downtown locations, it affects business owners, many of whom park in the long-term lots on Vermont and New Hampshire, or behind their businesses with access via the alleys.

DLI posted a member poll on May 24<sup>th</sup> to gather information and feedback on this event and to date we have received 43 responses from retail, restaurant, and hospitality sectors. Rather than simply offering two options: 1) Yes, I support closing the streets 2) No, I do not support closing the streets, we offered a third choice to support closing the streets until 12pm, which is a compromise that we discussed with the race director. As of this writing 58% of respondents are not in support of closing the streets for any length of time, 22% are supportive of closing the streets from 5am-12pm, and 20% are supportive of closing the streets for the full length of time. We do feel that there are a number of businesses among those who chose "no" who would agree to the 12pm street closure time. Sundays are already a shorter business day given the traditionally later opening and earlier closure of both retail and hospitality establishments. Opening the streets back up by 12pm would allow the maximum number of affected businesses to operate on as normal a schedule as possible.

We have been able to review the economic impact reports prepared by eXplore Lawrence for projected revenue generated by the Tour of Lawrence with an anticipated registration of 180 cyclists, 50% of them staying overnight. For the entire three day event the projected direct business sales are \$41,598, generating transient guest tax of \$751. This is not a compelling number that justifies the potential loss of revenue and sales tax generated by more than 100 businesses over an entire weekend day.

Downtown businesses are open to working with event organizers to keep the event in Lawrence and help it grow over the next several years. As stated in our previous letter, we would like to see the event succeed and develop a regional and national following in future years. We hope that we can reach a compromise that will help us achieve this objective.

Thank you,

Downtown Lawrence, Inc. Board of Directors

cc: Tom Markus, City Manager